

Madison County Electoral Board Meeting
Voter Registration Office, County Administration Bldg., 414 N. Main
St.
January 4, 2024

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 1:00 pm by Chairman James Smith. In attendance: Board members James Smith, Mike Sharman, Bryan Mitchell, and General Registrar Lauren Eanes. There were no observers.

New Member: Newly appointed member Bryan Mitchell was recognized, and the three members shared information on their respective backgrounds.

Election of Officers: Upon nomination by Mr. Sharman, the Board unanimously elected Mr. Smith as Chairman. Upon nomination by Mr. Smith, the Board unanimously elected Mr. Sharman as Vice Chairman. Mr. Smith noted that, by law, Mr. Mitchell becomes Secretary. So, upon nomination by Mr. Sharman, the Board unanimously elected Mr. Mitchell as Secretary.

Meeting Agenda: The draft agenda was amended to eliminate the proposed closed session, and to add discussion of voting machine software to the public meeting.

Old Business: The Registrar reported that **poll pads** had been purchased.

New Business: The Registrar reported that all **preparations** for the upcoming primary are on schedule.

The Board had a general discussion of training needs for **Election Officials**. The Board cited a need for more focus on precinct closings, and it suggested that an additional training session for chief officials would be beneficial. Training sessions are currently scheduled for February 12 and 22. The Registrar reported that the terms of existing Election Officials are expiring and that she would be polling them by email the next day to determine their interest in serving another three-year term. The Board agreed to issue a press release to solicit prospective new Election Officials. Approval of Election Officials is scheduled for the Board's February meeting.

The Chairman asked the Registrar to prepare a **list of duties** for her office and for the Board for use in supporting the FY 2025 budget request to the Board of Supervisors. There was a general discussion of the costs of running elections, and there was general agreement on the probable need for additional part-time staff during early voting.

The Registrar presented **draft FY 25 budget proposals** for the Board and for her office. After a line-by-line review of both draft budget proposals, the Board reached agreement on final drafts for approval at the Board's February 12 meeting.

The Board discussed the **current status of the county's voting machine software**. The Registrar reported that in December a representative of the county's voting machine software vendor, Hart Intercivic, contacted her by telephone to say that Hart wanted to replace the current software with a different version. Hart has offered its assurance that the current software has not created any problems in tallying the votes of the last two elections, but it has declined to say in writing why its proposed change of software is necessary or desirable. The Board agreed that, in the absence of an explanation on the record from Hart, the Board would be derelict in its duties as legal custodian of the voting machines to sanction changing the software at this point. The Board authorized a FOIA request to Hart on the status of the current software. The Board also agreed to explore its options for ensuring the security and integrity of future elections.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 4:52 pm.

Next meeting: January 12 at 10:00 am.

Signed: _____
H. Bryan Mitchell, Secretary